JOHN MACLEAN

and

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

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FOREWORD

John Maclean died on St. Andrew's Day, 1923. Today his name is a legend. An epic figure of the stature of Muir and Wallace, he is the embodiment of all the finest aspirations in the Scottish character. He is loved and remembered for his courage, his integrity, his utter selflessness and his complete incorruptibility. He fought for his own class and his own nation as no other Scotsman has done. He identified himself with the oppressed everywhere. He had "squared his conduct with his intellect". He was, indeed, "The battle-post of the poor".

Year after year since his death his name and his work have been commemorated by various groups and organisations. Scottish politics have taken many devious turns since the twenties, but there has always been somebody somewhere to remind us that the John Maclean line was the only meaningful line of Scottish political development.

In this connection our great poet Hugh MacDiarmid has over and over again acted as our national conscience reminding us that John Maclean was the true embodiment of Scottish thinking and feeling, and that all alternatives lead to compromise and then to betrayal. His own poems on Maclean gave rise to a whole range of other poems by the best of the Scottish poets; Sidney Goodsir Smith, Somhairle Maclean, T. S. Law, John Kincaid, Alastair Beveridge and others, and to fine songs by Hamish Henderson and Matt McGinn. No other political figure has received anything like the recognition which the poets of Scotland have given to John Maclean.

And in this connection, too, Nan Maclean Milton, the younger daughter of Maclean, has shown the same determination, the same tenacity of purpose in fighting for the recognition of her father's name and for the reintroduction of his ideas into the mainstream of Scottish politics. Her constant, tireless efforts over thirty years are beginning to bear fruit in the John Maclean Society, formed in 1968 with the express purpose of "commemorating the life, educational work, leadership and sacrificial effort for the workers of Scotland and the world, of John Maclean; of encouraging appropriate research into, and publication of his writings, lectures, and speeches; and of relating his teaching to the circumstances of today".

The intention of the present pamphlet is to concentrate on the "meaning of John Maclean" with special reference to the question of Scottish independence, but it is impossible to do this without showing something of the great proletarian leader of the First World War, for it was in those years of mass struggle and near-revolution that the

greatness of Maclean was first revealed. The chapter by Jim Fyfe is intended to give, briefly, some idea of how and why Maclean achieved this greatness in the eyes of his own people.

A final word. I have often been asked: what is "the meaning of John Maclean", and the clearest answer I can give is: he unites the national sense and the international sense of the Scottish people at the highest level of intellect, experience and integrity. He is indeed, as Somhairle Maclean says, "the top and hem of our story".

Thurso Berwick.

THE JOHN MACLEAN SOCIETY.

This organisation is named after the illustrious workers' leader and teacher, JOHN MACLEAN, born in Pollokshaws, Glasgow, on 14th August, 1879, and died there on 30th November, 1923.

Its objects are to commemorate the life, educational work, leadership and sacrificial effort for the workers of Scotland and the World, of John Maclean; to encourage appropriate research; to publish his writings, lectures and speeches; and to relate his teaching to the circumstances of today.

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THE BALLANT O JOHN MACLEAN. Sidney Goodsir Smith

Muir and Wallace his prison mates,
Lenin and Connolly,
Nane ither ever was his maik,
But ithers there wull be.

Though mocked an hated, crucified,
An jailed an mocked again,
Yet never dousit they the gleid
He lit on Glesca Green.

The mongers triumphed ower soon
As they harried him till daith,
For nou their micht is crottlan doun
But freedom yet has breith.

Ahint his corp throu broukit streets
Three miles o murners thrang,
He wan the hate of the Monger breed
But the love o his ain was strang.

Turn ower in yir sleep, Maclean,
Nane is michty as the deid,
Speak yir daithless speak again
- The evil gets their ain remeid.

"I speak no as the accused", he said
Til the Lords in crammassie,
"But as the accuser o yir state
Biggit on gowd and infamie:

I see yir guilt there rinnan doun
Heid til fit the bluid rins reid,
Ye're loftit there lik godes abune
But the feet are clay an the hert's deid."

Och, tods have holes, the birds nest
But whaur's the Son o Man tae rest?
On prison stanes they laid his heid
An prison gruel was his breid.

A great hert warslan in a cell
Like a live bird in a cage
Till hint the bars o a stane hell
They brak the eagle o the age.

But they brakna his words of flame
Nor dousit his memorie,
- Turn ower in yir sleep, Maclean,
Scotland has need of ye !

* * * * * * *

JOHN MACLEAN

THE GHOST FROM THE PAST.

by Jim Fyfe.

It was the greatest demonstration Govan had ever seen. Thousands of workers from Fairfields were marching towards the centre of Glasgow. It looked as if nothing could stop them. But when they reached Lorne Street School in Plantation they halted. And a mighty roar went up: "John Maclean! John Maclean!"

The date was December 17, 1915.

The shop stewards strode into the school and asked a schoolmaster to lead them to the Sheriff Court where they were protesting about rent increases. He agreed and was carried through the streets to head the biggest demonstration Glasgow had ever produced.

His name was JOHN MACLEAN - and this was the last time he ever set foot in a school building as a teacher.

What sort of man was he? How did "Daddy Maclean" - as his pupils called him - come to have such influence in the Glasgow Labour movement at its most turbulent period?

Maclean was among the reddest of the "Red Clydesiders". He was a revolutionary socialist and an atheist. Yet when he died, the Irish Republican Army sent a delegate to his funeral and letters of condolence to his family.

THERE WERE MANY INFLUENCES WHICH MADE MACLEAN A REVOLUTIONARY. AMONG THEM HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND.

Born in Pollokshaws in 1879, he was the sixth of seven children.

His father was a potter who came from Mull. His mother, too, was from the Highlands - Corpach near Fort William.

Being from the Highlands his parents knew about the evictions and clearances from the land to make way for sheep and game. This would be passed on to their son, helping to produce his socialism.

The Glasgow he grew up in was different from the one we know today. There were in fact two Glasgows. The Glasgow of the rich few, and the Glasgow of the many poor. The rich lived in the beautiful terraces of Pollokshields and the mansions of Kelvinside. The poor lived, crowded, in squalid tenements in Calton, Govan and Townhead.

The rich had servants to look after their every need. The poor lived in constant terror of unemployment and the "parish". For even in the best of times there were rarely less than 10 per cent of the men unemployed. Booms and slumps followed each other with terrifying regularity. Wages were about £1 a week for a semi-skilled man, slightly less for a labourer.

Holidays with pay were unknown and the Glasgow Fair holiday when all the works were closed was a nightmare for the housewife. Drink was a great problem among the working class as so many drowned their sorrows in cheap whisky.

These were the days when the mark of a Glasgow child was rickets and when tuberculosis was common.

Glasgow men worked in heavy industry - the shipyards, the railway works and the forges. The work was heavy and exhausting.

Making the weekend's food took almost all of the Saturday. Meat had to be prepared and stock for soup made. There were few "convenience" foods such as we have today.

The greatest day of the year for the children was Ne'erday. Christmas still wasn't a popular festival in Scotland, and the youngsters got their pennies at the New Year.

This is the background in which Maclean was brought up. He was a bright youngster and determined to work his way through school to university.

When he was accepted for university he was teaching in Polmadie. he went to classes at 8. a. m., returned to school to teach and went back to the university in the evening. During the summer he worked as a farm labourer.

It was this experience of poverty and struggle that converted him to socialism in the end. This and a man called John McDougall - a stonemason - who ran a debating club in Pollokshaws. The newly fledged M. A.

and the tradesman were the leading lights of the Pollokshaws Progressive Union.

This small society with less than 50 members had a great effect on Maclean. Soon he was in trouble with his headmaster for refusing to teach religion and was threatened with the sack.

BUT HE PERSISTED WITH HIS REFUSAL AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE HE BECAME A MARXIST SOCIALIST.

But in the early 1900's he wasn't among the extremists in the Socialist movement. He believed that if the Labour Party, the Trade Unions, and the Co-operatives worked together Socialism could come through Parliament.

But the career of the British Labour leaders in Parliament soon disillusioned him. They became "respectable" and most of them saw themselves as a ginger group harrying the Liberal Party. Maclean would have none of this.

He joined the Marxist Social Democratic Federation in 1903, and devoted his life to propaganda for socialism. Every night and weekend he spoke at meetings all over Scotland - and it was at one of these he met his wife, Agnes Wood, of Hawick.

All the time these meetings were going on Maclean was going further and further left. In 1912 the militant British Socialist Party was formed from an amalgamation of left-wing groups with the Social Democratic Party (the old S. D. F.), and Maclean became a member. When the First World War broke out he stuck to his anti-war principles - unlike the leaders of the Socialist parties throughout Europe.

Soon detectives were attending all his meetings taking note of what he said. But although he knew his speeches were being studied closely by the authorities he refused to moderate them.

The inevitable happened in November, 1915. He was arrested, charged with sedition and sentenced to £5 or five days in jail. He refused to pay the fine, on principle. These five days were the first of many jail sentences he served - all for political offences. But the harassment from the authorities didn't change his opinion.

Just after he was sentenced in December, 1915, he was given a month's notice by the Govan School Board. But he didn't have to work his notice.

THE NEXT DAY THE GOVAN SHIPBUILDERS CALLED AT HIS SCHOOL AND FROM THEN ON HE BECAME A RELENTLESS REVOLUTIONARY AGITATOR.

It was his propaganda which so aroused the Clyde workers that the Government passed the first Rent Restriction Act to stop factors and

property-owners raising rents while the men were at the Front.

Soon his name was a by-word throughout Europe wherever there were left-wing papers. One of his closest allies was James Connolly - the Irish Republican and Nationalist who was executed in 1916.

Maclean took the Irish struggle very seriously. More and more he began to think that an independent Scottish workers' republic was the only way to get Socialism in Scotland.

At this time there was a strong Home Rule spirit in the Scottish Labour Movement. The I. L. P. - under the influence of Keir Hardie - had been converted to the idea of a Scots Parliament. But Maclean's idea was different.

He no longer believed that a parliament as such was the answer. According to him there were two Scotlands. The Scotland of the capitalists and the Scotland of the workers. Home Rule would be meaningless if it substituted Scots bosses for English ones.

Under a parliamentary system he thought this would be almost inevitable. So he came out for a Scottish Workers' Republic. In this republic, power would rest in the hands of the vast majority of the Scottish people - the workers and the farm labourers. They would control the country through workers' councils and community councils. This would ensure that no bureaucracy or sect would take over from them.

All during this time - the last two years of the war - Maclean was in and out of jail. He went on hunger-strike and was forcibly fed. He was released on condition he didn't get into trouble again. But it was hopeless. He wouldn't be silenced.

In 1918, he was jailed again and was sentenced to five years in jail with hard labour.

At the beginning of the year he had been appointed Russian Consul in Glasgow - but the only people who recognised him were Scotland Yard and the Russians.

He tried to help the scores of Russian refugees who were living in Glasgow in poverty, and raised funds for them. But he carried on with his propaganda against the war and was arrested again.

He knew he had little chance of being found not guilty, so he decided to use the trial to spread his political views. He called no witnesses but spoke for 75 minutes stating his case. He again attacked the war and the rulers who were responsible for it in the most vigorous speech heard in a Scottish dock for decades.

Maclean then put the prosecution on to the defensive by saying: "I am not here, then. as the accused, but as the accuser, of Capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot". But it was no use - he was jailed for five

years and sent to Peterhead Prison. Six months later he was released after a long campaign by his friends.

He stood as Labour candidate in Gorbals in the 1918 election, received 7500 votes - but was defeated.

But the way that Scotland generally swung to the left convinced him that the only way Socialism could advance in Scotland was if there was a Workers' Republic - and to get this a Scottish Workers' Republican Party was needed. The English workers were still tied to the Liberal Party, thought Maclean. If Scotland remained part of the British Empire it would be dragged into wars and depressions.

But if Scotland became a Socialist republic there was a possibility that there would be a revolution all over the capitalist world.

THAT WAS WHY HE STOOD UP AND WAS COUNTED FOR SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE.

His associates like Willie Gallacher and Tom Bell joined the infant British Communist Party - but not Maclean.

He objected to control from London and Moscow. He wrote in his paper "Vanguard": The less the Russians have to do with our politics the better. We know the situation - they don't.

With four friends he now formed the Tramps Trust Unlimited. They went all over Scotland from Dumfries to Wick spreading their ideas. They had no money and relied for their living expenses on the collections they could gather.

By 1923 he'd served a total of about four years in prison and his health was beginning to fail.

But this was the year he formed the Scottish Workers' Republican Party to fight for Socialism and Independence. He was bitterly opposed by the Labour and Communist Parties but he persisted in putting up 20 candidates in the Glasgow Council Elections that year. But speaking at street corners in the fog of a Glasgow winter was too much for him. He died on November 30, 1923.

With his passing the members of his party joined either the Labour or the Communist Parties and his name disappeared except as a legend.

(Reprint from "Sunday Mail".)

JOHN MACLEAN & SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

by Nan Maclean Milton

"The wheel of British Imperialism has now come full circle. The English world-empire, founded in the mid-seventeenth century by Oliver Cromwell's first effective conquest of the non-English parts of Great Britain, now ends where it began.

For such is the fundamental underlying significance of the present revival of Welsh and Scottish nationalism".

F. A. Ridley (Socialist Leader 9/12/67)

Before 1914 the majority of European socialists took for granted the principle of the self-determination of small nations, which had been formally adopted by the Second International at the beginning of the century. One hundred years ago Karl Marx went as far as declaring that the task of the First International was "everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. The special task of the Central Council in London is to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the NATIONAL EMANCIPATION OF IRELAND is no question of abstract justice or human sympathy but the first condition of THEIR OWN EMANCIPATION." (Letter dated 9th April, 1870)

The one notable controversy was that between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg over Polish independence. Rosa maintained that under capitalism there was no possibility of real national independence and under socialism there would be no need for it, while Lenin insisted that Russian socialists should fight for the right of the Poles to have a separate state if they so wished. In answer to the argument that separation would undermine the solidarity of the Polish and Russian workers, he instanced the case of the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 - "The close alliance of the Norwegian and Swedish workers, their complete fraternal class solidarity gained from the fact that the Swedish workers recognized the right of the Norwegians to secede..."

Although Home Rule for Scotland was on the agenda of the Labour Party, and Keir Hardie had stressed the need for a Scottish Parliament as far back as 1888, it was not taken very seriously in the Labour move ment at this period. We even find John Maclean poking fun at young Scottish nationalists -

"....It appears that these 'Dog Days' have afforded young Scots an opportunity of airing their pet designs for a separate Parliament for Scotland. I should fancy that the sole aspirants to such a glorious ideal are the enthusiasts just indicated and those curious cranks whimsically styled 'The Scottish Patriots'. The rest of us are calmly indifferent; why should we be otherwise?..... The means of communication, together with the means for the transport

of commodities, enable all races to learn the latest ideas and use the most up-to-date commodities and machinery drawn from all ends of the earth, and the growth of international trusts is tending to bind even closer the races of mankind..." (Justice 27/7/12)

In 1913 Maclean's chief colleague, J. D. McDougall, put forward another argument against the "home rule" kind of nationalism, in a report of the famous 1913 transport strike in Dublin -

> "Remember! You Irishmen in Scotland who will read this leaflet, that the strike was against a Nationalist employer, a man who publishes Nationalist papers. Learn the lesson! Why did we call it the 'Dublin Demonstration'? Because it demonstrates beyond the shadow of all doubt that mere Home Rule will do nothing to alter the condition of the Irish working class; that a Parliament full of Nationalists in Dublin would batter down the Irish labouring men; and that if Home Rule is to benefit the working men of Ireland, it will only be through capturing the Irish Parliament by returning to it a majority of such men as Larkin, Connolly, Partridge, and Lawler. That is to say, Irish working men, like the workers of every race, must become Socialists and so fight out the class struggle, of which the Dublin disturbance is an incident, to a triumphant conclusion."

It should be noted that it was during the 1913 strike that James Connolly formed the Irish Citizen Army in order to defend the strikers from the violence of the employers. Connolly, however, understood the class nature of the anti-imperialist struggle better than the majority of British socialists of the period. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find the Irish Citizen Army, with Connolly at its head, as the spearhead of the anti-war, anti-imperialist Easter Rising in 1916.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

The outbreak of war increased the confusion in the socialist movement regarding the national question. Pro-war socialists justified their support for the war by claiming that it was being fought in defence of Belgian liberty and that only victory would guarantee the rights of small nations. There was naturally a revulsion against any kind of "nationalism" in the ranks of the anti-war socialists, who called themselves "Internationalists".

In Russia the majority of the Bolsheviks even wanted to scrap the idea of the self-determination of nations, just because it was being used as a smokescreen to hide the real nature of the war. They also considered that the call for the liberation of nations within capitalism diverted the workers from the real Socialist solution. Lenin, however, disagreed. He maintained:

"... the dialectics of history is such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments of the bacilli which help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat. To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe .. means repudiating social revolution...."

THE EASTER RISING.

John Maclean, like Lenin, hailed the Easter Rising as the first mighty blow against British Imperialism. He was indirectly involved, as he had been closely connected with the Irish Labour Movement for many years, and was on friendly terms with its leaders. He was also involved because of the large Irish population on the Clyde. In addition, quite a few anti-war socialists made their way to Ireland to escape conscription and were caught up (very willingly) in the rising.

I have recently been in touch with Mr. Seamus Reader, Dublin, who not only took part in the Easter Rising, but also subsequently organised the Scottish Brigade of the Irish Republican Army. He recently sent me a copy of an article "Irishmen in Scotland," 1916, written by him for an Irish Paper. In it he described vividly the help given to the Irish rebels by Scottish revolutionaries as well as by Irishmen living in the West of Scotland. It is obvious from this article that Connolly was considerably influenced by the turbulent anti-war and anti-conscription struggles on the Clyde, and that Maclean's remark at his 1916 trial - "When Jim Connolly saw how things were going on the Clyde, he determined on the Easter Rising" - was quite correct.

The Easter Rising helped to change Maclean's attitude to the whole question of the independence of small nations, and he began to realise, like Connolly, that national liberation was a necessary prelude to socialism. Like Connolly, of course, he never failed to insist that it was only a prelude.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

One of the by-products of the Bolshevik Revolution, which galvanised the whole socialist movement and profoundly affected it in many ways, was a new understanding of imperialism and the national question. As early as September, 1917, Lenin has made clear what the Bolshevik policy was with regard to oppressed nations:-

"The principal conditions of a democratic peace is the renunciation of claims to annexation. This must not be wrongly understood in the sense that all the powers should recover what they have lost, but according to the only true meaning, which is that every

"... the dialectics of history is such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments of the bacilli which help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat. To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe .. means repudiating social revolution...."

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nationality without exception, in Europe and in the colonies, should obtain freedom and the opportunity to decide themselves if they will form a distinct State or enter as a constituent member of some other State .... Further we must do immediate justice to the claims of the Ukrainians and Finlanders, and to assure them, as well as all other nationalities in Russia, complete liberty including that of secession ...."

A NATIONAL FIGURE.

Maclean was elected a member of the national executive of the British Socialist Party for the first time in 1916, but it was not until the beginning of 1919 that he was able to function in this connection. By this time he had become famous throughout the left-wing movement in England as well as in Scotland, and, according to his diary, was in great demand as a speaker all over the country.

In my opinion it was this experience which finally forced him towards the idea of Scottish independence. It must have become clear to him very quickly that the great swing to the left, amounting almost to a political revolution, which had taken place in Scotland, just had not taken place in England to anything like a comparable degree. This was naturally reflected in the outlook of the majority of the E.C. members who were, of course, English. Policies which suited English conditions rather than Scottish ones were adopted, in a perfectly democratic manner.

Thus Maclean learned from bitter experience exactly what the domination of a small country by a much larger one really meant. In this case, it meant that the revolutionary movement in industrial Scotland was dammed up, and that the revolutionary fervour which Maclean himself had so largely helped to create, had no vehicle for its expression, but was siphoned off into the harmless Westminster activity favoured by the English majority.

In addition to policy differences, Maclean was particularly incensed by the inclusion on the executive of Lieut. Col. Malone -

"...The leadership of the B.S.P. then fell to Lieut. Col. Malone, M.P., who in 1918 was on the executive of the Reconstruction Society, the body that flooded the country with leaflets poisoning the minds of the people against Russia and the Russian Revolution. To ask me to work with Malone for revolution is a joke. A man like that ought not to be allowed in a revolutionary Marxist party... To allow a Malone to lead a revolutionary party after a record such as his is high treason to communism. You might as well appoint Churchill 'Honorary President' of the Russian Republic! If England is to be led by Malone then let us Marxians in Scotland forge ahead on entirely independent lines ..... Scotland is firmer for Marxism than any other part of the British Empire ....."

THE IRISH REVOLUTION.

Maclean was intensely interested in the development of the Irish Revolution, and made his way to Ireland just as soon as his many engagements in 1919 would allow. It was July before he was able to get across to Dublin, having been specially invited earlier in the year by Delia, Jim Larkin's sister. In the meantime he had invited revolutionary socialist Countess Markiewicz, heroine of the Easter Rising, to Glasgow, where she was the star attraction on May Day.

At the meetings which Delia Larkin organised for him in Dublin he pulled no punches, emphasising over and over again that Ireland alone could never gain her freedom, but that her republic depended on the revolt and success of British Labour. He was pleased with his reception at a meeting in the Irish Workers' Hall.

> "....Although the meeting was attended by a large number of the men who participated in the Easter Week rebellion, no objection was raised to my suggestion as to the attitude to be adopted towards 'Tommy'. In personal conversation, I found that these men fought not against the soldiers as enemies of Ireland, but just as interposed tools of British Capitalism, and that they had no hatred of the soldiers but of the Government that foully used the soldiers in Ireland - though they were prepared to fight again for Ireland should occasion arise. They clearly comprehended the position I urged, and the ultimate advantage of it from the world workers' point of view".

At other meetings he received bitter and outspoken criticism, although he reported having received support from Cathal O'Shannon and Sean McLoughlin "who fought through the rebellion, and urged the international position as a true supporter of Jim Connolly must..." He also had the opportunity of addressing the shop steward movement inside the Transport Union, and "from the applause I received and the sentiments expressed after my address, the Irish workers clearly understand the international role of the workers....."

Maclean regarded the Irish struggle for independence as part of the struggle for socialism, and, as Marx did 50 years previously, considered it the first duty of British Labour to support it. He regarded the British Empire as the greatest obstacle to socialism, and its break-up as the first duty of every socialist. As the year wore on and he became more and more disillusioned with the situation in the English movement, he began to couple Scotland with Ireland. In 1920 he wrote a pamphlet "The Irish Tragedy, Scotland's Disgrace", calling for a General Strike for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, and in particular castigating the Scots for allowing Scottish

Regiments to be poured into Ireland.

> ".... My plea is that Britain has no right to dominate Ireland with constabulary armed with bombs, and with an army and navy considered foreign by the Irish. We Scots have been taught to revere the names of Sir William Wallace and Robert Bruce because these doughty men of old are recorded as championing the cause of freedom when Edward I and Edward II tried to absorb Scotland as part of English territory. All Scots must therefore appreciate the plight of Ireland, which for over seven centuries has chafed under the same English yoke, and now ought to stand by Ireland in her last great effort for freedom: the last because triumph is bound to be hers very soon ...."

THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY.

By the time the British Communist Party was at long last formed, after two years of negotiations, Maclean was quite sure that Scotland was nearer to socialism than England, and must strike the first blow. For that reason there must be a separate Scottish Communist Party with its headquarters in Glasgow. In August, 1920, he published "Russia's appeal to the British Workers" by the E. C. of the Communist International, and in the preface he wrote

> "We must form a Communist Council of Action to assume real power when the time comes. In the process I favour a Scottish Communist Republic as the first step to World Communion with Glasgow as the head and centre."

In November he was writing in his paper "The Vanguard" -

> "We on the Clyde have a mighty mission to fulfil. We can make Glasgow a Petrograd, a revolutionary storm centre second to none. A Scottish breakaway at this juncture would bring the Empire crashing to the ground and free the waiting workers of the world ...."

In this way Maclean was attempting to combine the national with the revolutionary struggle as Connolly had done, and for this reason it was quite essential to have a separate revolutionary party in Scotland. In December he insisted "We in Scotland must not let ourselves play second fiddle to any organisation with headquarters in London. Whatever co-operation may be established between the two revolutionary forces in the countries at present composing the 'United' Kingdom, that co-operation must be based on the wills of the free national units."

By December, 1920, Maclean had also become very much aware of the danger of Russian domination. "I for one will not follow a policy dictated by Lenin", he wrote in 'The Vanguard', "until he knows the situation more clearly.... The less Russians interfere in the internal affairs of other countries at this juncture the better for the cause

of the revolution in those countries ....."

THE SCOTTISH WORKERS' REPUBLICAN PARTY.

Having failed to achieve an official Scottish Communist Party, Maclean refused to join the British one, but tried to carry on his revolutionary work as a member of the Socialist Labour Party. The majority of the members had joined the Communist Party, but those remaining retained the excellent monthly paper "The Socialist", published in Glasgow. It was more or less a Scottish party, and Maclean hoped he could build it into the Scottish revolutionary party he needed. However, this was not to be. The members were hostile to the idea of Scottish independence, and before he was jailed again in May, 1921, Maclean knew he would have to build a new party. After serving a sentence of three months, he was jailed again in August, this time for a year.

When he came out of prison for the last time, at the end of 1922, he still rejected the British Communist Party, which had now completely oriented round Russia. In his 1922 Election Address he wrote - ".....In spite of my keen desire to help Lenin and the other comrades I am not prepared to let Moscow dictate to Glasgow. The Communist Party has sold itself to Moscow, with disastrous results both to the Russian and to the British revolutionary movements."

At the end of his defence speech at his 1921 trial he had stated "I for one am out for a Scottish Workers' Republic". Now he set about forming a party to achieve that aim, and at the beginning of 1923 the Scottish Workers' Republican Party was formed. The new party plunged into political activity of every kind, including taking part in municipal and parliamentary elections. Some of these Election Addresses have been preserved, and these are the only record of the policy of the new party that I have been able to find.

Maclean fought a municipal by-election in February, 1923, and in his Election Address outlined first some immediate demands and then the final objective, the Scottish Workers' Republic -

> "As unemployment is a weapon to cow the workers into accepting lower wages and a longer week, it must be clear that the main problem before the workers of Glasgow is unemployment. That was my attitude in October, 1920, when I started the present unemployed movement in Glasgow; that is my attitude today. I propose, if returned, to place before the Corporation a scheme that would absorb all the unemployed of Glasgow. The gist of my proposal is to reclaim all the moorland lying round Glasgow

and establish a system of co-operative or collective farming on scientific lines. Out of this vast experiment would arise experience enough to modernise Scottish agriculture.....

I am in favour of municipalising every industry suitable for local control, as a briefly intermediate system leading on to social ownership i.e. ownership free from interest payment.

I wish to see the city extended so as to control the whole of the Clyde valley; in other words, its conversion into a Provincial Council so as to enable the workers more adequately to control all the industries in this very clearly defined area.

The limits imposed by Parliament on the Corporation necessitate a Scottish Parliament. I wish and am striving for one independent of England altogether, for reasons beyond those of Glasgow's immediate interests. I wish a Scottish Workers' Republic, within which the workers in control can evolve present-day capitalist property into working-class property, as a stage on the road to communal use of all the wealth produced ....."

The S. W. R. P. contested 20 wards in the May municipal elections, a by-election in June, and in July Maclean contested another by-election in Townhead, and once again his Election Address was of more than parochial interest - ending up with these words -

"One course is open to us in Scotland. Let us declare for a Workers' Republic in Scotland. A Republic would absolve us from responsibility towards England, should she declare war on France. That would protect us from air and other attacks, but would not secure the workers a livelihood. Hence the need for a Workers' Republic.

The workers ought at once to select representatives from all over Scotland to form a Workers' Parliament in Glasgow, with powers and support to take control of all industries, set all the fit to work, control all the products, distribute these products as required for production or human consumption, and export all surplus goods for those of other lands needed by us in Scotland.

That would be a political and economic revolution ...."

If any reader is still under the impression that the formation of the S. W. R. P. was caused by a change from Maclean's Marxist Internationalist outlook towards some kind of degenerate parochialism, then the following excerpt from his last Election Address, written ten days before he died on 30th November, should finally dispel that illusion. -

"For the wage-earning class there is but one alternative to a capitalist war for markets. The root of all the trouble in society at present is the inevitable robbery of the workers by the propertied class, simply because it is the propertied class. To end that robbery would be to end the social troubles of modern society. The way to end that robbery is the transfer of the land and the means of production and transport from the present possessors to the community. Community ownership is communism. The transfer is a Social Revolution, not the bloodshed that may or may not accompany the transfer.

Russia could not produce the World Revolution. Neither can we in Gorbals, in Scotland, in Great Britain. Before England is ready I am sure the next war will be on us. I therefore consider that Scotland's wisest policy is to declare for a republic in Scotland, so that the youths of Scotland will not be forced out to die for England's markets.

I accordingly stand out as a Scottish Republican candidate, feeling sure that if Scotland had to elect a Parliament to sit in Glasgow it would vote for a working-class Parliament.

Such a Parliament would have to use the might of the workers to force the land and the means of production in Scotland out of the grasp of the brutal few who control them, and place them at the full disposal of the community. The Social Revolution is possible sooner in Scotland than in England .... Scottish separation is part of the process of England's imperial disintegration and is a help towards the ultimate triumph of the workers of the world."

NAN MACLEAN MILTON.

ON JOHN MACLEAN by John Kincaid.

Echoes rise from footfalls into legend
when men march round a sated citadel
and turn a prophet-hero's shafts of vision
to seven trumpets to confound the walls.
Oh legend-echoes climb the screes of time
and swell to fanfares on a peak of will ....
intense, incensed ....
till deadwood on the day's decanted slopes
comes falling from the linn-loosed battle-plumes
to plunge its end in cataracts of revolt.

MacLean, our John MacLean,
strong and sombre in a night of death,
stood out against a looming citadel
where evil glinted midst the bannered panes,
and filling up his lungs with winds of knowledge
pronounced his vision flight by flight
in trumpet-calls of morning challenge.

The notes fell flaring on tomorrow's shore,
and sap in wisdom's never-ending trees
sang slow responses to his soaring claims.
And people,
the people on the surer side of legend
made merry in a mighty tribute-dance
on cultivated sites of long-long-levelled walls.

When legend fills the echoes of new footfalls
with harmonies and contrapuntals of MacLean
then will the seven trumpets sound again ....
and the walls will shake,
and quiver,
and go down.

JOHN MACLEAN (1879 - 1923)

by Hugh MacDiarmid.

All the buildings in Glasgow are grey
With cruelty and meanness of spirit,
But once in a while one greyer than the rest
A song shall merit
Since a miracle of true courage is seen
For a moment its walls between.

Look at it, you fools, with unseeing eyes
And deny it with lying lips !
But your craven bowels well know what it is
And hasten to eclipse
In a cell - as black as the shut boards of the Book
You lie by - the light no coward can brook.

It is not the blue of heaven that colours
The blue jowls of your thugs of police.
And 'justice' may well do its filthy work
Behind walls as filthy as these
And congratulate itself blindly, and never know
The prisoner takes the light with him as he goes below

Stand close, stand close, and block out the light
As long as you can, you ministers and lawyers,
Hulking brutes of police, you fat bourgeoisie,
Sleek derma for congested guts - its fires
Will leap through yet: already it is clear
Of all Maclean's foes not one was his peer.

As Pilate and the Roman soldiers to Christ
Were Law and Order to the finest Scot of his day -
One of the few true men in our sordid breed,
A flash of sun in a country all prison-grey.
Speak to others of Christian charity; I cry again
For vengeance on the murderers of John Maclean.

Let the light of truth in on the bare pretence
Of Justice that sentenced him behind these grey walls.
All law is the contemptible fraud he declared it.
Like a lightning-bolt at last the workers' wrath falls
On all such castles of cowards and whether they be
Uniformed in ermine, or blue, or khaki.

Royal honours for murderers and fools! The "fount of
honour"
Is poisoned and spreads its corruption all through
But Scotland will think yet of the broken body
And unbreakable spirit, Maclean, of you,
And know you were indeed the true tower of its strength
As your prison of its foul stupidity, at length.

"The Revolutionary Movement in Britain
1900 - 1921"

by

WALTER KENDALL

—o—

JOHN MACLEAN'S "Open letter to Lenin"

JOHN MACLEAN on CLYDESIDE in World War One

Why MACLEAN never joined the Communist Party of "Great Britain"

The truth about MACLEAN'S alleged "HALLUCINATIONS"

—o—

All discussed in detail on the basis of new and hitherto unpublished material in Walter Kendall's remarkable new study of a remarkable period.

"Every Scottish Socialist should read this book.
Get it into your local library."

(Nan Milton, daughter of John Maclean).

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